

# **AVERY AND MASA**

**PROTECTORS OF THE ENDANGERED**

## **JAVA LAVA**



WRITTEN BY  
**STEVE BARRETT AND  
MIKE DEENEY**  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
**ERLE TOMPKINS**



This book belongs to an Avery  
All-Star named . . .

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*Our mission is to entertain and  
educate children with movement  
driven content to help protect the  
endangered planet.*

Avery and Masa: Protectors of the Endangered

Java Lava ® 2020

Steve Barrett and Mike Deeney

Written, Edited and Produced by Steve Barrett and Mike Deeney.  
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**PROTECTORS OF THE ENDANGERED**

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*For our family*

*This book is dedicated to Robert,  
Chuck D, Linda and Annie. To  
Kathleen, Frank, Mikayla and Allana.  
To Cynthia, Steve, Lyndsay, Kelsey,  
Hayden and Camden.*

*With love for Sterling and Betsy. To  
Lily and Dylan, you are never alone.  
We will always be there to help you  
stand up to change the tide.*





## Chapter 1

### *The Sea Cow*

“Storm!” Tiago shouted as he nervously guided the ship through a maze of waves. “Dangerous waters ahead!”

The shouts were followed by waves crashing on the bow of an old wooden steamship named *The Sea Cow*. *The Sea Cow* would not be able to handle waves of this size and strength much longer. Unfortunately, this was the first of many waves to follow.

The Indian Ocean had been calm on most nights of this expedition, but tonight the clouds became dark and seemed to command the waves to attack. It was close to midnight and the rest of the crew was sleeping. The

deck of the ship was now starting to take on water. Tiago knew he could not do this alone.

The sea swelled up, ready to burst again. The waves chopped at the rusty rivets on deck. *The Sea Cow* had seen many voyages and had never failed to complete its mission. This time they would have to face Mother Nature head on.

The rough sea awakened the captain. He jumped from his bed and was thrown against the wall. He grabbed his lucky sailor's hat and rushed out the door.

“What is going on here, Tiago?” the captain asked. “The skies were clear.”

“Captain, the waters just came alive,” Tiago said as he tried to steer.

“Get the others up – we need to save the cargo!” the captain yelled.

The captain grabbed the wheel, using all of his muscle to turn the ship into a surging wave. Tiago ran into the hull of the ship to wake the crew.

Snuggled in their bunk beds, the crew snored right through the first set of waves.

“Wake up you lazy dogs!”  
Tiago shouted as he ran down the  
hall ringing a loud bell.

The crew snapped their  
heads up in fear. They knew that  
bell meant this would be a long  
night.

The seven crewmen darted  
through the halls of *The Sea Cow*  
to their positions. The ship came  
alive with flashing lights and  
ringing bells.

“Check the crates!” the  
captain screamed. “Get below  
and strap everything down.  
Nukie Bluff will have our heads  
if we lose his precious cargo!”



## Chapter 2

# *Precious Cargo*

The cargo hold of *The Sea Cow* began to fill with water. It splashed on the starboard side, hitting the pine wood crates stacked in the corner. Five of them were stacked on top of each other from largest to smallest. Some were stenciled with a destination along with the words — *Property of Nukie Bluff*.

The crates began to lift beneath the rising water. One by one they began to come alive. Squeaks, snorts, growls, and grunts filled the room. At the top, the smallest crate started to rock back and forth. It moved closer and closer to the edge. Two little fingers crept out of the holes

on the side revealing small furry hands.

“Hey, get me out of here!”  
the little critter inside called.

Angry growls grew louder and louder in another crate. They were soon accompanied by a series of scratching noises. From inside, sharp black nails clawed ferociously against the surface. Soon, the wood began to splinter and crack as the scratching grew faster and faster. The determined creature continued until he finally broke through.

The angry creature was covered in red and black fur. He



scanned the room, puzzled by the unsteady floor, flickering lights, and rising water. He dropped to the floor and let out an angry growl. A high-pitched voice squealed in response. *This critter must be able to tell me what happened,* he thought.

“Who’s there?” he asked.

“I’m trapped and I can’t get out!” came a reply from the smallest crate. “Come on, buddy – get me out of here!”

“Calm down, dude, I work out with bamboo. This is nothing,” the creature said as he struggled to claw at the wood.

After a long struggle and many complaints from the little critter inside, the wood pieces were pulled apart. There was just enough of an opening for a tiny, odd-looking brown critter with big golden eyes to creep out.

The creature and the critter took a moment between the swaying of the ship and swishing of the water to look each other up and down, as if they were aliens from different planets.

“You’re weird looking, buddy,” the critter said.

“I was thinking the same thing, dude,” the creature said. “I

can't remember what happened.  
Do you know how we got here?"

"No idea, buddy," the critter replied. "It seems like we were taken prisoner. Maybe we have some crazy fans. Are you famous or something?"

"My name is Avery."

"Yeah, never heard of you. It must be me that they're after. I'm Masa, of course," said the critter.

"Okay Masa, if you want to get out of here – follow me."



## Chapter 3

### *Cat and Mouse*

Avery and Masa examined the other crates. They were large enough to contain a human boy or girl like *you*. They peeked into small holes on the side, but could not see anything. The sounds from within had stopped.

“What do you think are in these other crates?” Masa asked.

“I don’t know, but that one is a lot bigger than ours,” Avery replied.

“Maybe we shouldn’t open them,” Masa said. “There could be monsters in there.”

“We have to free them,” Avery said. “No one should be treated this way.”

“Who would do such a thing?”

“Someone or something named *Nukie Bluff*,” Avery read. “Masa, help me get this one open.”

As Avery began to claw at the largest crate, the door to the cargo hold burst open. Tiago stepped into the flickering light. Avery and Masa quickly ducked behind the crate. Tiago noticed the two broken ones on the floor.

“Oh my,” Tiago gasped. “I have to find them or the captain is going to be furious.”

Tiago grabbed a catchpole hanging from the wall and raised

the big net above his head. He slowly moved through the watery floor.

“Here kitty, kitty,” he called out.

Avery and Masa gave each other an insulted look.

“Is this guy serious?” Masa whispered. “I’m no kitty cat. How rude!”



“No time to be sensitive, Masa. If we can get past him, we can find our way out of here,” Avery whispered.



Masa grabbed a hold of Avery's tail and they hopped onto the crate. Just as Tiago approached them, Avery noticed a cargo net on the wall used to secure supplies and tools. He quickly grabbed a hold of the net, climbing right above Tiago's head. Masa held tight onto Avery's tail, dangling just out of Tiago's view.

Tiago quickly peered his head around the crate. Suddenly, several creatures scurried out of the corner squeaking in three different directions. Tiago swung his net straight down upon them.

"I have you now!" he shouted.

Tiago lifted his net to reveal a rather large rodent.

“Rats,” Tiago said. “I hate rats.”

Tiago slowly tiptoed around the room and walked right by Avery and Masa clinging to the net above.

“I’ll find you!” Tiago yelled. “There is nowhere to hide.”

Avery moved closer to the door. The exit was almost in grasp when suddenly, the captain rushed in.

“The waves are getting bigger!” the captain shouted as the ship dipped deeper and

deeper into the ocean. The captain ignored the crates on the floor as he caught his breath. “This is no small storm – it’s a typhoon!”

## Chapter 4

### *Lost at Sea*

Avery and Masa looked at each other with their mouths wide open. Tiago scratched his head.

“A ti-foon? What’s that?”  
Tiago asked.

“It’s a tropical cyclone!” the captain yelled.

“Huh?” Tiago asked.

“Oh come on, you should know this,” the captain said. “It’s spinning wind on the surface of the ocean. I just heard the

warning on the radio. It's headed right for us!"

"What do we do?" Tiago asked.

"We've got to get to the eye of the storm or we won't survive."

"What about our precious cargo?" Tiago asked. "We'll lose our money."

"We may lose our lives! Don't worry – they'll be here when we get out of danger. Lock the door!" ordered the captain.

Before the captain and Tiago darted out of the cargo hold, Avery dove past the door above

their heads. Avery's tail pulled Masa out of the way just as the door closed behind him. They escaped through the galley of the ship, sneaking behind the cook as he prepared some sort of stew. The aroma smelled delicious.

“Avery, I haven't eaten in a while. My stomach needs some love,” Masa whispered as his eyes popped out in hunger.

“You're thinking about food right now? Here, eat this,” Avery said as he grabbed a crusty loaf of bread off the counter.

“Nectar! Is there any hot sauce, buddy?” Masa asked as he

bit into a piece of bread almost as big as his body.

“Masa, stop focusing on your stomach,” Avery replied. “If we don’t get out of here, *we* might be the dinner.”

The cook continued slicing and dicing vegetables. He threw them into a large pot as he sang some form of a 1980’s love song. Avery tiptoed quietly out of the kitchen until Masa knocked over a stack of pots and pans trying to get the last whiff of food. The startled cook turned around with a big sharp knife. He moved toward them, but Avery was too fast. Although they had escaped

easily, Avery gave Masa a scolding growl.

“Sorry buddy, I can’t control myself sometimes,” Masa said as Avery just shook his head.

They finally reached the deck, only to find chaos. Thunder and rain met large waves crashing on deck. The crew was running in all different directions. They bumped into each other as they tried to maintain their balance on the unstable ocean. With all this commotion, Avery and Masa were able to reach the stern of the ship undetected.



“We’ve got to jump!” Avery said. “It’s our only choice.”

“Are you crazy?” Masa asked. “I’m allergic to salt water! Oh . . . and I can’t swim! *But you want us to jump into a typhoon?*”

Avery looked around for a solution. He spotted something that just might save them. “I’ve got it! Get in here,” Avery commanded as he grabbed a blue plastic food cooler on wheels nearby.

Avery rolled the cooler over to the edge of the ship. Masa hesitated as he looked out to the crashing waves.

“We are going on an epic ride, dude,” Avery said. “You have to trust me. We can’t do anything stuck on this ship. Out there is our adventure.”

Masa fearfully climbed inside the cooler. He held on tight as Avery pushed it off the edge and into the ocean.

As a massive wave approached the ship, Avery dove into the ocean and climbed into the cooler with Masa. Avery quickly shut the lid just as the wave smashed on top of them. For what seemed like hours, they waited for the storm to pass as waves tossed them all over the ocean.

Morning came and *The Sea Cow* was a distant memory. Avery and Masa finally popped open the cooler lid gasping for air.

“That is a terrible smell,” Avery said as he breathed in the fresh ocean breeze as if his life depended on it.

“Oh come on, it’s not that bad,” Masa replied as he climbed out of the cooler with a bottle of chocolate milk. “Maybe it was that fourth chocolate milk. It upset my stomach, but they are soooo good.”

“All right Masa, enough playing around, we’ve got to find out where we are,” Avery said.

Masa climbed to the top of Avery’s head to get a better view. He searched the horizon with his big eyes and came upon a sight that had him raise his hands in triumph.

“I’ll become the next *Great Loris explorer!*”



## Chapter 5

### *Legends and Fairy Tales*

“Land!” Masa shouted. “I see land!”

“Great eyes, Masa,” Avery said. “See, you just need to have faith.”

Avery and Masa paddled the cooler up to one of the many beautiful Indonesian islands. Even from far away you could see vibrant green grass and tall palm trees.

“My home is one of these islands. The island of Java,” Masa said.

“There’s one problem. One of these islands is forbidden,” Masa warned.

“Forbidden? You mean we are not allowed to go there?” Avery asked.

“You wouldn’t want to. The scariest, most dangerous creatures ever guard the island,” replied Masa.

“What kind of creatures?” Avery asked.

“Dragons,” Masa replied.

“Dragons are not real, Masa,” Avery said.

“Yes they are,” Masa warned. “My mom told me stories about *The Great Loris* who explored the world to find paradise. He believed there was a place where

animals and humans lived happily in peace and no one tried to eat each other.”

“What happened to him?” Avery asked.

“He became *The Great Loris*. He returned with treasures and tales. He said the world was full of mystery and wonder, but to never venture to one of the islands because it was inhabited with dragons that eat anyone who trespasses on their land,” recalled Masa.

“That just sounds like a kid’s fairy tale,” Avery said.

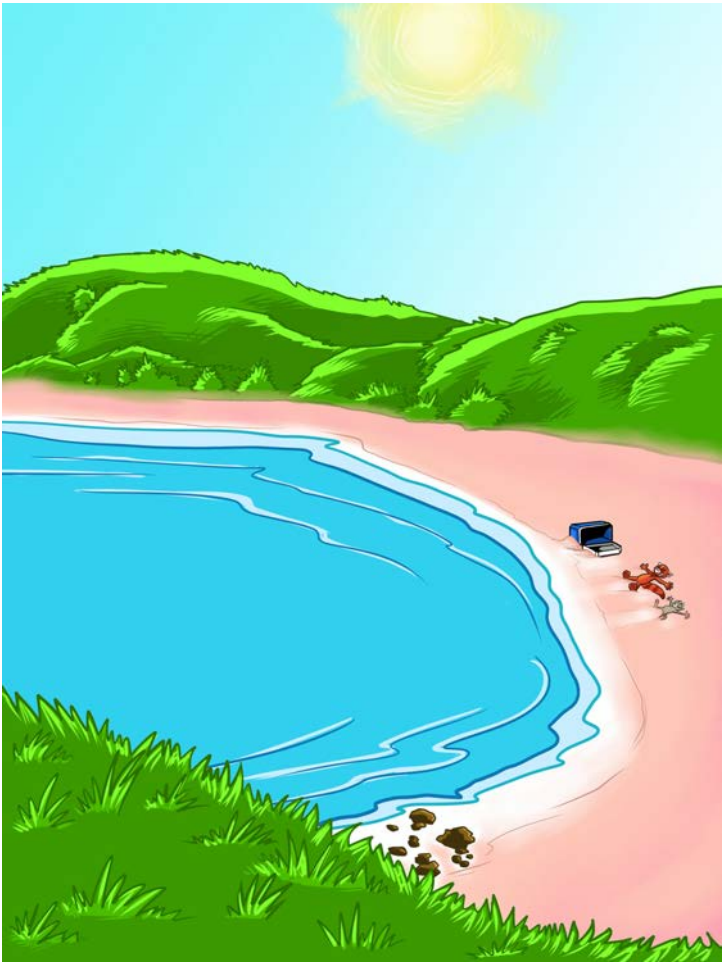
“No, it’s real. Everyone knows about it. My friend’s



sister's cousin was eaten by a dragon," Masa stated.

"Okay, whatever Masa. I'll believe it when I see it," Avery said.

Avery and Masa paddled up to the nearest island. The beach was beautiful, but there was something odd about the sand. It was pink. Too tired to notice, they hopped out of the cooler, took a few steps and dropped to the sand with exhaustion.



After a long peaceful nap,  
Avery was startled by an eerie  
sound in the distance.

Avery listened closer, but it was hard to focus over Masa's snoring. It sounded like a series of hissing and snapping branches. Avery nudged Masa awake.

"Masa, wake up. This isn't the island of Java, is it?" Avery asked.

"I didn't want to say anything, but now that you mention it . . . *The Great Loris* said there was one way you could tell if it was the island of dragons," Masa replied as he looked down at his feet. "The sand was pink!"

Avery and Masa jumped up and brushed the pink sand off their fur. They carefully glanced

around the island. To their right, they noticed countless sets of eyes approaching them. They were strangely low to the ground and glimmering in the moonlight. Masa frightfully hopped onto Avery's tail as they began to back up. On the other side of the beach another set of eyes appeared to their left. They were marching slowly towards them from both sides.

As the two armies closed in on Avery and Masa, the crashing waves at their back reminded them that they were at a dead end. There was only one way to go – forward. As the armies

marched closer into full view,  
Masa's eyes exploded with fear.

“Run Avery!” Masa shouted.  
“It's the dragons – I told you  
they're real!”

## Chapter 6

### *Island of Dragons*

Avery's energy came soaring back and his legs burst into action. Masa held on tight as Avery's tail whipped forward. They ran straight toward the heart of the island not knowing what other dangers lurked ahead. The two armies of dragons met in the middle of the beach and moved in unison after them. Avery thrashed through trees and bushes while the dragons tore them down as they followed.

“I can’t see past these trees, Masa!” Avery shouted as he raced through the trees.

“I’ll guide you, buddy,” Masa replied as a bush smacked his face. “Now turn left! No, my left!”

Avery turned left, but got his foot tangled in a bush following the wrong directions. They looked back to see the dragons gaining on them.

“Nice one Masa, left is the other way,” Avery scolded.

“Oh yeah, I’m left-handed so I get confused,” Masa replied.

Avery's paw thrashed through the vines and leaves as they finally freed themselves. They continued on for miles until they made it to the other side of the island – trapped on another beach.

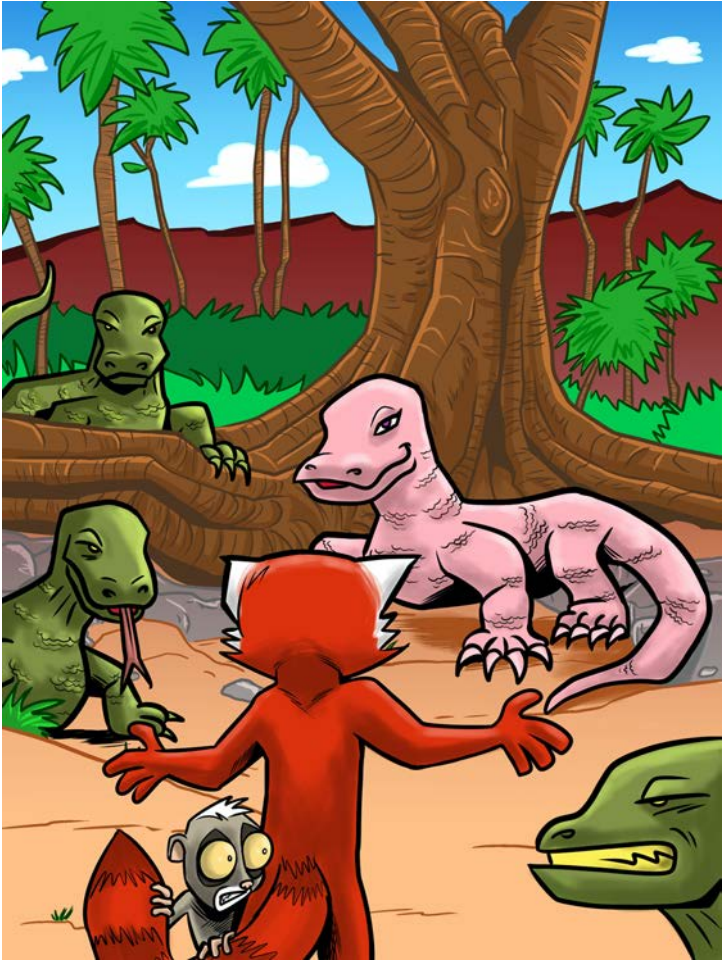
The dragons approached slowly, hissing with their forked tongues. They pressed Avery and Masa backward until their legs touched water. More and more dragons came from every direction. This time there was no escape. Over one hundred vicious dragons surrounded them.

Avery and Masa had landed on the infamous island of



Komodo – home to the Komodo dragon. They lived up to their name as the largest living lizard. They had greenish grey scaly skin and long thick bodies. They detected prey by smell from over four miles away, and their reddish saliva was poisonous.

Unexpectedly, the dragons divided down the middle. Kamora, a beautiful dragon with pale pink skin paraded to the front. The army bowed their heads and kicked up sand as a sign of respect. As Kamora reached Avery and Masa, she stood up on her hind legs. Masa instantly froze and covered his eyes with his hands.



Avery raised his hands and nodded his head toward the elegant reptile.

“I have never seen such different species work together like that. A curious pair you are,” Kamora said in a soft voice.

“What is your purpose here?”

“No purpose, your Grace. We are just lost,” Avery replied.

“I suppose that *is* your purpose . . . to return what is lost,” she hissed. “Curious it is – but you will not find it here. You are needed elsewhere. Go at once or become our dinner.”

“Great, you got it pink dragon lady,” replied Masa as he uncovered his eyes. “We’re out of here! Just go across the island

and bring us our cooler. We'll wait here."

"We have arranged a ride for you," she said. "If you are worthy, he will appear."

"He?" Avery asked. "How would *he* know if we are worthy?"

"Sudan is the sage of the sea," she replied. "He is almost a century old and is the wisest creature in the ocean."

"How will we know it is him?" Avery asked.

"You cannot miss him," she replied.

“So, let me get this straight . . . if we are worthy we live, if we are not worthy we’re fish food?” Masa asked. “Sounds nectar.”

“Zip it, Masa” Avery said as they splashed deeper and deeper into the water. “Let’s go before they change their minds.”

Avery turned to the pink dragon, “Thank you, oh powerful mother of dragons, for your compassion and understanding.”

Avery and Masa reluctantly faced the ocean waters once again. *They knew if they were not worthy, they would not survive the night in the rough ocean waters.*

## Chapter 7

### *Surfing Sudan*

“This has got to be the worst day ever,” Masa said as he perched on top of Avery’s head, digging his little paws into his face. “We’re going to drown or be eaten by those vicious ocean bullies.”

“You mean sharks?” Avery asked.

“Yeah . . . or that!” Masa cautioned as he pointed to the water below them.

Suddenly an enormous beast surfaced from the water beneath them. Its massive body lifted them out of the water. Avery and Masa now stood right between two of the biggest eyes they had ever seen.

The size of the beast was something to behold. It was a gigantic blue whale, the largest creature on earth. It glided gracefully through the choppy water. Their fear turned to amazement as they marveled at the smooth blue skin reaching over one hundred feet as it emerged from the water.



“Avery, it must be Sudan!”  
Masa cheered.

The beautiful beast glided  
peacefully as if it commanded the



ocean to obey its every move. A blast of water burst out of its blowhole that reached over thirty feet high. The beast spoke in a kind thoughtful voice.

“What brings land creatures to the middle of my ocean?” Sudan asked.

“Well-uh-hello, great sage of the sea . . . I’m Avery and this is Masa. We need your help,” Avery said. “We’ve been captured, chased, attacked, and tossed all over the ocean. Some cruel humans are taking animals from their homes like it’s some kind of game,” Avery said.

“I’ve heard of this human game. Our ocean friends call it whaling, but land creatures call it poaching,” Sudan said. “It has grown too big for this world.”

“How do we stop them?” Avery asked.

“It is no easy task. There are many just like them. Kamora says it would take millions of humans and animals working together. Yet, I believe that just one person can change the tide — but two *friends* can change the world.”

“We have to try,” Avery said.

“Are you willing to sacrifice and face those who wish to stop you?”

“We will do our best,” Avery replied.

“That is all that I require. I believe in your quest. Let’s get you home,” Sudan said.

The water divided as Sudan pierced through the sea. Avery kept balance, surfing atop the giant whale’s body as Masa swung from his tail. Many sea creatures surfaced to cheer and offer their support. Avery smiled in awe at the beauty of the ocean. What an awesome ride!

“We’re surfing, Avery!”  
Masa shouted from within the mist. “Whoo-hoo!”

Sudan stopped just beyond the shore of Java.

“This is as far as I can go. The waves will guide you in.”

“Sudan, how can we ever repay you?” Avery asked.

“I’m sure my brothers and sisters of the ocean will need help from time to time. Please do not forget about us.”

“You have our word, Sudan,” Avery said as Sudan quietly disappeared into the ocean.

## Chapter 8

### *Nobody Home*

The island of Java was covered in mist, hiding the vibrant green flora. Hundreds of volcano tips pierced through the fog layer. Avery could hardly believe his eyes. It was a new world of impenetrable jungles and erupting volcanoes full of mystery.

The trees were very strange shapes. The animals remained hidden, but their sounds were everywhere. The tree cover was so dense that no sunlight was

able to reach the ground. The journey filled Avery's mind with a desire to learn more about this foreign world.

“This is my home,” Masa said. “It’s got trees and slides and on Wednesdays we have shadow puppet theatre and dancing shows on the weekends. My mom makes this tasty nectar casserole oh, and the termite stew is delish. You’ll love it! Am I talking too much? You must be homesick . . . sorry, buddy.”

“It’s okay Masa, I’m happy you’re home,” Avery replied as they walked through the dense jungle. Avery looked up to see many majestic mountains in the

distance. “Those are beautiful mountains, Masa, I would love to take a closer look.”

“Those aren’t mountains,” Masa replied. “They’re volcanoes. Look but don’t touch. We have forty-five active volcanoes that could blow at any moment.”

“That is impressive,” Avery said. “This island truly is full of surprises.”

Masa guided Avery through the jungle. Among the trees were impressive ancient structures that blended nature and human influence. Avery was amazed at every turn. As they reached the secret loris village, strangely, it

was empty. No one was playing. No one was dancing. No one was gathered at the fun tree slide. Only an old Javan rhinoceros named Utari was there to greet them.

“Utari, where is everyone?” Masa asked. “I want to show my new best friend, Avery, around.”

“Welcome Avery. Sadly, Masa, they are gone. Our population here has slowly disappeared over time,” Utari said. “Now your family is among the world’s most endangered. Just like my kind.”



“It’s happening everywhere, Avery!” Masa screamed. “My mother – where is she?”

“She tried to protect you, like she always has,” Utari said. “She kept your village hidden in the thickness of the jungle, but this time someone came and would not stop until they found you. They took them all away.”

“We’ve got to stop them, Avery,” Masa said.

“Will you help us, Utari?” Avery asked.

“I am one of the last of my kind and I am just too old, my friend,” Utari said.

“Besides, it won’t matter.  
They will come back. They  
always come back.”



“Do you know where they’ve gone?” Avery asked.

“They are still here waiting at this very moment,” Utari said. “You should leave while you have the chance.”

Just then the captain and Tiago jumped out of the bushes with nets and dart guns.

“There they are! Get them!” the captain yelled.

Tiago ran towards Masa swinging his net wildly back and forth. Avery jumped into the cover of the trees as darts whizzed by. He kept running until he was far into the safety of the dense jungle. He stopped

running when he realized Masa was not with him. *How could I just leave my friend? What do I do now?* Avery thought. He closed his eyes, searching for an answer.

Back at the village, Masa wrestled to get loose from the nets. The captain grabbed him and held him up close. He stared right into his big golden eyes. "This little one has caused us so much trouble," the captain said kneeling down. "We know just what to do with the likes of you. Take him away, Tiago."

Utari bowed his head in sadness as Masa was carried away.

## Chapter 9

### *Java Lava*

The next day, *The Sea Cow* was anchored just past the waves of the Java shore. The ship was damaged, but the captain's change in course had saved their lives. It also brought them an unexpected treasure – the entire slow loris family. The crew was hard at work preparing dozens of crates to be transported into small rowboats to the ship. The captain and Tiago arrived with the last catch of the day – Masa.

The makeshift camp was bustling with activity. An assembly line had formed to pass the crates from one person to the next. The sounds of growls and moans followed the line of animals as they made their way closer to the boats.

“Nukie Bluff will pay us a fortune for these little critters, Tiago,” the captain said. “But he won’t be happy if we don’t catch that Firefox.”



“He’ll be back. He seems to like this little fella,” replied Tiago as he grabbed Masa and held him close.

“You’re going to help us catch that troublesome Firefox and Nukie Bluff will never know we lost either of you.”

Just then a large black chopper appeared in the distance. The captain and Tiago took one look at each other in panic. The captain gulped in desperation and jumped into action.

“Faster! Load the cargo or we’re all in trouble!” the captain commanded. “Nukie Bluff is here!”

The commands were met with a thunderous explosion. A nearby volcano had erupted. Sparks shot out of the top like



fireworks in July. The volcano blasted lava and ash over six thousand feet high, releasing a combination of red, yellow, and orange lava down its peak. The chopper quickly turned to avoid the blast.

As the crew scrambled even faster to load the boats, the chopper aggressively landed on the beach. It kicked up sand in the captain and Tiago's faces. Despite being stung by powerful blasts of sand, they waited patiently for Nukie Bluff to exit the chopper. His large brown boots touched down and they both lowered their heads.

Nukie Bluff was a large man dressed in safari gear. He had a handlebar mustache and wore a brown safari hat. His rolled up sleeves revealed big strong arms. With an angry stare, he slowly marched toward them.

“We’ve loaded all of the crates on the boats, sir, and this is the last one,” the captain said as he held Masa up and handed him over to Nukie. Masa gritted his little teeth.



“Impressive, most impressive,” Nukie said. “But where is my prize Firefox?”

“Uh, he escaped sir,” the captain stammered.

“What?” Nukie yelled as he pointed his finger in the captain’s face. “You fool! You will pay for your incompetence!”

“It was Tiago’s fault!” replied the captain as he pointed his finger at Tiago.

“Be quiet Captain, your ship and cargo are now mine,” Nukie scolded as he started petting Masa’s head. “Now get these things over to *my* ship.”

Another eruption from the volcano rained down ash and dust. It was impossible to see anything but bright red lava.

Nukie Bluff and the men struggled to find their way. Soon, they were startled by sounds of hissing that grew louder and louder. It seemed to be coming closer. They huddled together searching for the source of the scary noise.

Through the dust and ash, the source materialized. *The men couldn't believe their eyes.* It was an army of Komodo dragons ready for battle. Avery led them riding on Kamora's back. They continued to march forward as lava poured in the distance. They advanced in every direction until all of the humans were surrounded.

The men dropped all of the crates and looked at Nukie Bluff — awaiting orders. Nukie grabbed his dart gun and net, then cracked his knuckles in anticipation.

“Don’t just stand there — get them!” Nukie shouted.

The captain and Tiago grabbed their nets.

Avery readied himself. The dragons hissed and clawed into the ash with their feet. A thick dust settled over them. The humans became confused and disoriented. Suddenly, the dragons surged through the dust at full speed.



“Charge!” Avery shouted.

“Protect the island!” Kamora commanded.

All the men took one look at each other, dropped their nets, and ran away. Defiant to the end, Nukie Bluff stood his ground. He grabbed Masa and squeezed him tight.

“You can’t stop me with your little dragon army,” Nukie said as he held Masa up to his face. “Your bark is bigger than your bite.”

*You’re right, Masa thought, but our bite is toxic!*

Masa bit down hard on Nukie’s hand. He screamed in pain, dropping Masa in the sand.



“You bit me!” Nukie yelled.  
“Nobody bites me and gets away  
with it.”

Masa looked up just in time  
to see Nukie’s big boot coming  
right at him.

Masa rolled through Nukie’s  
legs and dodged each attempt  
from his boot to step on him.  
Avery rode Kamora faster to  
rescue his friend. He leapt  
forward, latching onto Nukie’s  
leg. Avery’s sharp claws caused  
Nukie to scream and squirm and  
hop around in pain. Avery let go  
after knowing Masa was safe.

Nukie Bluff fled toward his  
chopper. He hopped in the

cockpit and turned on the ignition. The chopper blades sliced through the ash and smoke, creating a funnel of dusty air. Nukie lifted off and circled around several times yelling at the animals below. He waved his hands wildly to scare them away, but instead all the dragons stood on their hind legs, hissing at him. Eventually, he flew away – defeated. Avery smiled with satisfaction.

Having nowhere to run, the rest of the humans dove into the water and swam towards *The Sea Cow*. The captain and Tiago reached the deck of a ship, waiting to be rescued. All of the

dragons stood on their hind legs and cheered in victory. Kamora nodded in approval at Avery and Masa.

## Chapter 10

### *A New Quest*

Avery and Masa breathed a sigh of relief, although it made them cough through the thick volcanic ash. They began the long task of releasing all of the animals from their crates. Each released animal turned to help the others until they were all freed. After they hugged each other, they gathered around their rescuers and cheered.

“Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!” they shouted.

Masa's mother came over to give him a big hug.

"You saved many lives today, son. I am so proud of you," Masa's mother said.

"It was Avery, he is the one who came back for me," Masa replied.

"We did it together, Masa," Avery said.

"Well then, I am proud of you both," Masa's mother praised.

"I owe you big time, buddy," Masa said. "I've decided from this moment

forward, I will ride by your side until we find your home.”

“No Masa,” Avery said.  
“Your home is here.”

“But I’ve always wanted to go on a quest just like the stories my mother told,” Masa replied.  
“Besides, there are many other creatures like us who need help. I’m sure we’ll do some good in this world along the way. We can be partners, friends, amigos, no – Superheroes! We’ll be superhero partners!”

“All right, all right Masa,” Avery said. “I guess Sudan was right. One person *can* change the

tide, but *two friends* can change the world.”

Avery and Masa embraced as new brothers. The crowd cheered. As they turned around Kamora and her army of dragons marched over to them.

“Uh, hi guys,” Masa said. “Thanks for coming. Can you not eat us now?”

“They won’t eat you Masa, they have a strict code of not eating what they didn’t catch. They’re funny that way,” Avery said.

“Oh, cool,” Masa replied. “How did you guys get all the way from the other island?”

“Well Masa, Komodo dragons are great swimmers.” Avery said. “Who knew? Quite amazing creatures they are.”

“That’s nectar, buddy,” Masa replied as he dusted himself off. His coat and face were covered in ash like he had been in a tussle. “Welcome to paradise.”

“Not even paradise can escape the world’s problems,” said Kamora as she sauntered through the crowd of animals. They all gasped in fear at the sight of countless Komodo dragons behind her.



“Do not fear us, Avery and Masa are our new friends. We believe that they can bring peace to the animal kingdom. That is a quest worth taking,” Kamora said as the dragons all bowed their heads in approval.

Avery and Masa returned the gesture and bowed their heads.

“We will do our best, Kamora,” Avery replied. “Thank you for your help. You are a wise leader.”

Just then, a large unopened crate floated up to the shore. The animals walked over to see what was trapped inside. Avery

looked at the writing on the side, which read: *Property of Nukie Bluff, Australia.*"

Kamora requested three dragons to break open the latch. As the door latch was torn off, a large creature burst out and started hopping up and down. It was a handsome young kangaroo.

The kangaroo hopped right over to Masa, bending down to lick his face. Disgusted at first, Masa smiled at the sight of such an unusual animal.

"What a cute little monster," Masa said. "Can I keep him?"

“No Masa, but I think we just discovered our next adventure. We’re getting this little one home, dude,” Avery replied.

“Australia it is, buddy,” Masa said.

As the animals celebrated, Utari came down to join them. He had never imagined he would witness a family of slow lorises, countless Komodo dragons, and a mysterious Firefox all working together. He thanked them for their bravery.

“Thank you for protecting us, Avery and Masa,” Utari said.

“Yes, it seems you have found your purpose,” Kamora agreed. “To protect the endangered and return those who are lost.”

“And you have restored my hope in our future,” Utari added.

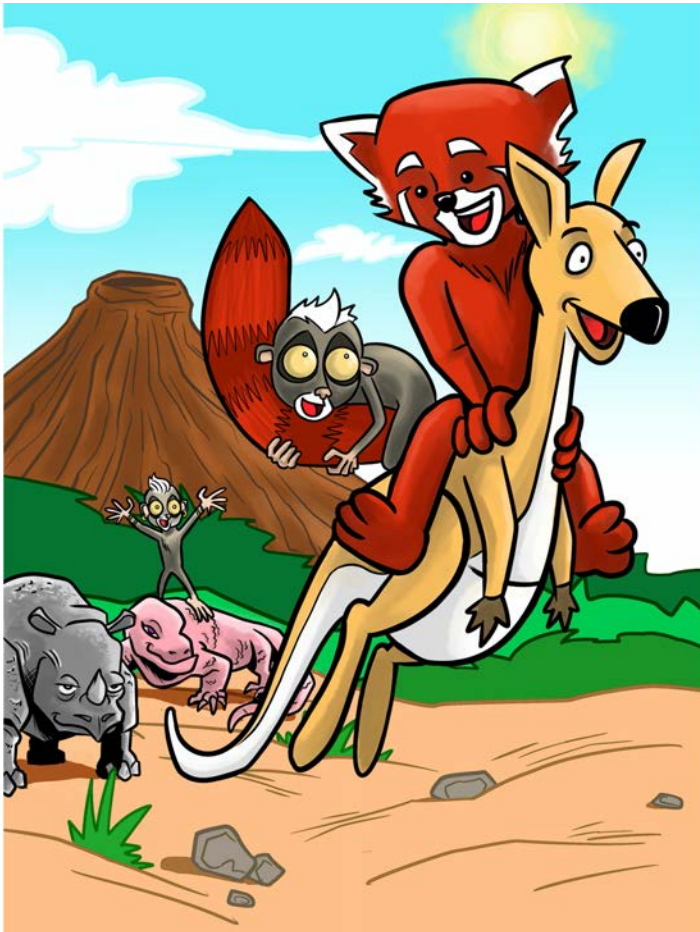
“Thank you both,” Avery replied. “We wouldn’t have been able to do it alone.”

“And you will never have to,” Kamora said. “We will spread the word across the animal kingdom to look after you. Sudan has already begun the task.”

“Nectar! You might actually be famous this time, Avery,”

Masa said. “But for a good cause, of course.”

“Okay Masa, that’s enough. It is time to go,” Avery said, shaking his head.



Finally, they said good-bye to Masa's mother and all of his family. They both jumped onto the young kangaroo and bounced away into the jungle.

Later that night at the village, Masa's mother had a new tale to tell about her son Masa, the new *Great Loris Explorer*.

When she was finished, the young lorises begged to hear more about the adventures of Avery and Masa. She just smiled because she felt the same way.

***LOOK FOR BOOKS 2 AND 3!***

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AVERY and MASA wake up in the middle of the Indian Ocean on a cargo ship, with no idea how they got there. They must escape capture from the infamous NUKIE BLUFF and his band of poachers before they strike again. They will face being captured, chased, stranded and tossed all over the ocean - and it's still the morning! Can AVERY and MASA save the animals of JAVA ISLAND before it's too late?

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